

## Warning on directory 'swindle'

LOCAL groups and regional offices of The Spastics Society have been warned of attempts to obtain money from them by sharp practice. Already four separate bills for nearly £20 each have been received for services neither asked for nor agreed to by the Society.

Here's how the 'swindle' works.

A company sends a bill to the Society or any other organisation it cares to approach, for including them in a special directory. In The Spastics Society's case, no previous approach was made to find out if they wanted to be included. And no agreement was made.

In fact the first the Society heard about the directory was when it received the bills. Two were received by the Harrogate office, for entries to separate sections of the same directory. A third bill was received at Birmingham.

### The law

A spokesman for the council in whose area the firm operates, said the attention of the local authorities had been drawn to the activities of the directory people. He said the bills received were carefully worded so as not to break the law.

However, further legislation was in the pipeline to prevent this kind of sharp practice in the future.

So far The Spastics Society has not fallen for the trick of inadvertently paying the bills received. But it is concerned that other organisations, perhaps less wary, might pay up, not realising that they were paying for something they may have neither asked for nor want.

## Bridge to adventure at fun playground



For most children play is something taken for granted. But for hundreds of handicapped youngsters it is an impossibility. While their able-bodied pals play football, climb trees, build camps and generally enjoy themselves, many handicapped children can only look on enviously from the confines of a

wheelchair. But the Handicapped Adventure Playground Association is changing all that. It is giving mentally and physically handicapped kids the chance to take part instead of just looking on. And the happiness shows in their faces. Full story and more pictures on pages 6 and 7.

## Pentagon papers take John to third degree

JOHN WILLIAMS, MA, a runner-up in the Society's 1974 Achievement Award, is now on his way to obtaining his third university degree—a Master of Philosophy. He has completed a 40,000 word thesis on the controversial Pentagon papers.

### His school

John, who is 34, is a former student of the Society's Thomas Delarue School and Oakwood Further Education Centre. In 1969, he went to Reading University where he obtained a BA degree in politics. Moving on to the Department of International Relations, at Sussex University, he obtained his MA in 1973.

John, who cannot walk, talk or feed himself, now lives in a Bayswater commune, where he 'talks' to other members by using an alphabet board and a pointer strapped to his forehead. He also uses a Possum electric typewriter. After the completion of his studies, he hopes to obtain a job in publishing as a book reviewer.

CHILDREN from the Society's Ingfield Manor School were among those confirmed by the Bishop of Horsham, the Rt Rev Colin Docker, at Billingshurst Parish Church last month. They were Steven Hudson, Philip Coulthard, David Scott, Patsy Coppin, Susan Willis, Harriet Purser and Sharon Clancy.

## Honestly, British Rail tries to have a heart

TRAVEL by rail will not necessarily mean one of those nightmarish sojourns in the guard's van soon. British Rail have announced a number of new developments to make train journeys more comfortable for the handicapped.

But the organisation's chairman, Mr Richard Marsh, was characteristically honest when he pointed out that the obstacles in the way of disabled passengers would not disappear overnight.

'This business is still supposed to be run as a commercial undertaking,' he said. 'We have no separate funds to provide facilities for the disabled. All we can do is to incorporate these facilities into new buildings and rolling stock, and see where we can build in facilities to existing services.'

### New space

Perhaps the major new development is a removable seat from the end bay of first class inter-city passenger coaches. This will provide a space for disabled passengers to travel in their wheelchairs.

These coaches are expected to come into operation in May this year, but only first class services are involved. Asked if disabled passengers could be allowed to travel at second class rates, Mr Marsh was cautious.

'This will be looked into,' he said. But he was concerned about the possibility of some able bodied people cheating the railways by pretending to be disabled. 'There are some terrible people about,' he joked.

Another way in which British Rail was helping the disabled was by providing 302 standard wheelchairs at 232 stations, with 49 special folding wheelchairs at 44 stations.

Mr Marsh pointed out that British Rail staff were always willing to help disabled passengers from their cars or taxis on to trains, and arrange for help at the other end of the journey. But he stressed that

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# What do spastics think of our services?

## Executive Council wants to know

WHAT do spastics think of the provision the Society makes for them? Do the people who are on the receiving end of the residential, educational, and employment facilities set up on their behalf by the Society, believe that the very best is being done for them, or do they think improvements could be made?

The Society's Executive Council—the men and women elected to form the ultimate decision-making authority of the Society and to initiate major policy decisions—wants to find out from the spastics themselves. At its last meeting the Executive decided that as a first step

in its efforts to discover the 'consumer's' point of view it would be a good idea to invite spastics, among them school leavers, those working in industry, plus spastics in Society centres, to take part in a preliminary seminar to frankly discuss their likes and dislikes. In addition, they could, naturally, put forward suggestions for any improvements in provision which they might feel could be investigated.

As the Society's Chairman, Mr Dorrien Belson, explained to Spastics News after the meeting: 'The Council has no entrenched attitudes, it is open minded and receptive to new ideas. All members are very concerned that we should have the views of spastics on all aspects of the work we are doing to help them. Their

needs, their likes and dislikes, are of paramount importance, and they must tell us what they want so that we can make the right decisions in the light of their hopes and our financial resources.'

Taking steps to discover the views of spastics is just one part of the Executive Council's strategy of keeping itself fully informed on all aspects of the Society's work. It meets at the Society's London headquarters six times a year and can call on any senior members of staff to attend to give information on their work or to discuss any particular subject.

In addition, the Council receives reports on the work of the advisory committees which are concerned with specific fields of activity, so that when the Council formulates policy and makes major decisions it does so after considering all relevant information. Now, in addition to the



Mr Dennis Bean—new member of the Council.

written reports, the Council is in favour of inviting staff experts and key members of advisory committees to attend meetings to discuss their work, frankly put forward their views, and answer questions

from Executive Council members.

How this close liaison policy works is demonstrated by the invitation to Professor J. P. M. Tizard of the Society's Medical Advisory Committee to attend the next meeting of the Executive Council to give the views of his committee on the future direction of the Society's medical research activities. Already the Council has authorised the setting-up of a small study group to consider how a strategy for future research could best be evolved, and its progress report will be made to the next meeting of the Council.

Research is a vital subject for the Society, and the Council had an exhaustive discussion at its last meeting on prenatal diagnosis. This was as a result of a proposition put forward by a member that in view of the new methods of diagnosing the abnormality of a foetus in an early stage of pregnancy, shouldn't the Coun-

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## Boys had a tree-squat for spastics

A SPONSORED tree-squat is the latest fund-raising idea of four boys from the King's School, Ely. Philip Davis, 12, Richard Maxwell, 14, Richard Green, 14, and Mark Eckstein, 14, spent 12 hours perched up a copper beech in Philip's garden at Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire.

During the sit-in they were kept supplied with coffee and sandwiches by Philip's parents, Dr and Mrs Ted Davis. They refused to come down even during a heavy downpour.

Their efforts resulted in a total of £15 for The Spastics Society's Meldreth Manor School.

## Now you can paddle your own canoe

HAVE you ever wanted to paddle your own canoe? Well The Spastics Society is giving you a chance to do just that. A special canoeing holiday has been arranged at Maristow House, Plymouth, from July 27 to August 1, and it is open to all disabled people over 12.

Said the Society's Physical Education Adviser, Mr Arthur Edwards, 'The course will cater for more experienced canoeists, and for learners. We can offer sheltered water, open sea or white water canoeing.

'On all occasions the ratio will be one instructor to one course participant, and the chief instructor will be Mr R Moore, Senior Instructor of the British Canoe Union, and

Mrs de Ryke, a physiotherapist canoe instructor.'

Canoes, life jackets, and board will be provided by the course organisers. Those taking part will have to provide sleeping bags and suitable clothing only. A list of suggested clothing will be sent to everyone who applies.

The cost of the course is £12. Applications should be made to Mr Edwards at The Spastics Society, 2 Starvecrow Close, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge.



## Fireman raised cash for new pony

LEADING fireman Leo Maxwell gives a helping hand to disabled rider Eric Nightingale, while instructor Elaine Gray holds the leading rein.

Together with firemen colleagues, Leo helps out regularly at riding sessions in the Newcastle upon Tyne area for spastic and other handicapped children. Recently he also organised some valuable financial aid for the scheme.

He persuaded a number of social clubs in the North-East to put on some fund-raising events, and the result of their efforts was a cheque for £300.

'We are delighted with the gifts from the clubs which will provide a new pony,' said Mrs Gray. 'Many of the children have to be lifted on and off the ponies and we just could not run the classes at all without the voluntary help of the firemen.'

Picture by courtesy of Evening Chronicle, Newcastle upon Tyne.

## Is this the best day centre in Britain?



PART of the new demonstration kitchen at the Aylesbury day centre.

A NEW day centre, designed to help bring disabled people of all kinds back into the mainstream of everyday life, has been opened in the London borough of Southwark. Claimed to be one of the most advanced in the country, the day centre will provide a whole range of remedial and social activities, from braille to speech therapy — from cookery to gardening.

Called the Aylesbury Day Centre, it cost £400,000. The opening ceremony took place at the end of last month, and was performed by Mrs Barbara Castle, Secretary of State for Social Services.

Up to 200 disabled people will attend the centre daily. They still include spastics, visually handicapped, mentally handicapped, and most other kinds of handicapped people.

Among the special facilities is a kitchen where demonstrations will be given on how to overcome such problems as cooking from a wheelchair. There is also a hairdressing salon to give practical help to disabled women. And there are facilities for such crafts as pottery, carpentry and photography.

A special room is being set aside for the display of aids and appliances designed to help the handicapped.

There is a large dining room, accessible from both ends of the building. And about 700 main meals daily will be supplied from the centre's own kitchen. A meals on wheels service will distribute 500 of these, and the remainder will be for people attending the centre.

On the first floor there is a large concert hall, which can be used for indoor sports, concerts and film shows.

There is a large terrace connecting the first floor with nearby flats by means of a ramped bridge. The terrace, which surrounds the building, provides an alternative means of escape in the event of a fire. The ramped area is thermostatically heated to avoid hazards in the case of frost or snow. A complex alarm system has been installed so that people using the centre are never far away from an alarm button.

For outdoor types there is a raised garden, so that people confined to wheelchairs are able to tend them.

## Garden centre plan at Wakes Hall

RESIDENTS of Wakes Hall adult spastics centre in Essex have plans to break into the garden centre business to help raise funds for a new extension. The Stars Organisation for Spastics, which runs the centre, has to raise £5,000 to cover increased building costs.

The residents have been selling a small amount of garden produce and flowers for some years, but now it is hoped to expand the business on a large scale by building new greenhouses and a garden shop, as well as planting a shrubbery in the grounds. They are now awaiting planning permission for the work. The scheme would also provide a number of extra jobs for the residents.

A CHARITY ball held at Witheridge, Devon, by a local committee supporting the Devon and Exeter Spastics Society made a profit of £321. The money will go towards the swimming pool fund for Vranth House Spastics School.

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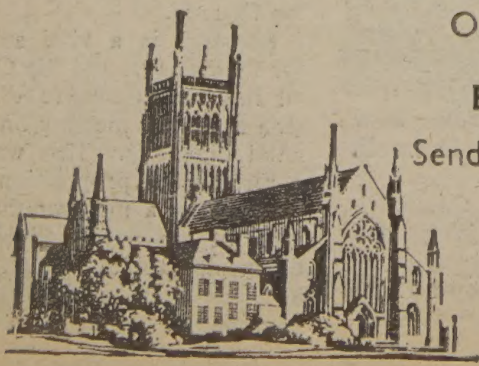
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**NOW 2 LARGER SIZES WITH WAIST TAPES**



**PENNY THRIFT**—seeking support for her design projects.

# When they ordered a wheelchair for Penny she told them what they could do with it!

Penny Thrift occupies room V at the rambling Middlesex Polytechnic buildings in Crouch End Hill, Hornsey, London. But she has changed the letters round to read Vroom, and that somehow sums up the inventiveness and energy of the girl who is the driving force behind the Disabilities Design Research Group there.

'The trouble with many of the aids now being produced for the physically handicapped,' she said, 'is that they have been designed by people who have never known what it is like to be disabled.'

And that is where Penny scores. She does know what it is like, because she suffers from multiple sclerosis. Because of this, she is aware of all the little more obscure problems which disabled people have to cope with, as well as the more obvious major ones.

'When I came out of hospital they told me that I was now disabled, and wrote me out a certificate for a wheelchair,' said Penny. 'Well, I told them they could stuff that right up their trouser legs.

the user does not necessarily have to bend forward. This is especially important for people with spinal injuries.

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect is that it does not have to be picked up. Instead it is slid forward on feet which are made of a low friction material. If greater pressure is applied, rubber studs are forced down until they make contact with the floor to form a brake. And the feet are jointed, so that they can swivel to any angle. This makes it a useful apparatus for walking upstairs or on uneven ground.

'So far this is the only frame which paraplegics can use,' said Penny, 'because it gives them all round support. We



**HAVE** you ever wanted to stick your child in the dustbin? Penny Thrift's bin chairs provide a comfortable way to do it. They're cheerful and cheap.

## What do spastics think?

Cont. from Page 1

Consider starting a long-term education campaign to help parents faced with the abortion dilemma to make a sensible decision? It was previously decided to seek the opinion of the Medical Advisory Council on this delicate and far-reaching moral issue, and the committee's report was considered in detail by the Council.

One of the main points that arose was that unlike some other handicaps where pre-natal diagnosis was of great value, it was believed that only one third of cerebral palsy cases occurred at the foetal stage. One third, it is thought, were caused in the nine hours before birth, and the rest some time after birth. As a result, the Council felt that in view of the fact that two thirds of cerebral palsy cases resulted after any possible pre-natal diagnosis could be of use, plus the assistance already provided by genetic counselling clinics, there was no specific action that it should take at the moment. It was agreed, however, that Professor Tizard should answer questions on the committee's report when he attends the next meeting of the Council.

Since the Annual General Meeting of the Society in November and the Executive Council elections, a vacancy had arisen due to the resignation of Mr J. L. Peterson. The Council decided to use its powers in such cases to elect Mr Dennis Bean, Chairman of the Society's Public Relations and Fund-Raising Committee, to fill the vacancy. Mr Bean will, however, stand for re-election at the next annual meeting of the Society in November.

The addition of Mr Bean means that the Council is now at its 'full strength' of 15 members. It may be of interest to readers of Spastics News who are members of the Society entitled to vote for the Council, that every member was present at the last meeting.

## A living

'When I got home I wondered what on earth I could do to earn my living. I had always been used to making quite good money, and here I was disabled. Then I noticed some washing up on the draining board. I thought to myself, "well, the first thing I am going to do is that washing up."

'Having done that the telephone rang. I decided to reach it before it stopped ringing, so I lurched from one piece of furniture to another and snatched the receiver on my way down as I crashed to the floor. But I had made it.'

Penny had started as she meant to go on, remaining independent. She decided to undertake a degree course in design at what was then Hornsey College of Art, specialising in furniture design, and she became the college's first ever disabled student. 'I was the guinea pig,' she said.

At first she had no ideas about designing for disabled people. And it was a little old lady who set her on that track.

'We had been given an open brief to design something,' she said. 'And I was wondering what I could do. On my way to college I noticed a little old lady walking down the road using a conventional walking frame. She looked so unsteady, particularly when she reached the edge of the kerb, and the frame had to be lifted down four or five inches.

'I thought I could design a much better walking frame, and so I adopted that as my project.'

The result was the Pennyweight walking and stair climbing frame, which is now being produced by the Rowen Community in South Wales. Penny noticed that the conventional frame only supported a person from the front. If they were to fall backwards, or sideways, there was nothing to grab hold of.

Her frame surrounds the body. It can be held towards the front or the rear, so that



**UPSTAIRS, downstairs, the Pennyweight walking and stairclimbing frame is helping the handicapped scale new heights.**

## British Rail tries—but cash is the problem

Cont. from Page 1

prior notice should be given of a disabled person's intention to travel. This would ensure that the necessary arrangements could be made.

'I cannot stress the importance of advance notice too strongly,' he said. 'But we are only too anxious to assist.' He pointed out that this year, more than 25,000 wheelchair users were expected to travel by rail, including 13,000 who are unable to leave their wheelchairs.

Other facilities being developed by British Rail are special toilets for the disabled, at a few stations, and modifications to the design of Inter-City coaches to provide wider doorways, better hand rails, and wider corridors.

Call for aid points are to be set up at busy stations where disabled people can go for help. These will be marked

with the 'disabled' symbol.

The new developments were announced at a press conference to launch a Central Council for the Disabled publication, 'A Guide to British Rail,' which has been produced in co-operation with British Rail. The guide, which is free, is designed to alert the physically handicapped of the difficulties which face them and the facilities which are available to them at 281 principal stations.

There are notes on parking facilities, accessibility of platforms, restaurant facilities and so on. One thing is repeated with monotonous regularity. That is the sentence, 'No special toilets for the disabled.' Of the 15 London stations listed, only five have special toilets, but two of these are ladies only, while at Victoria they boast a 'unisex' one.

At the launching, the Minister for the Disabled, Mr Alf Morris said it had long been

his aim to see disabled people not being prevented from living a normal life because of their handicaps. In these days, that meant being able to travel.

He added: 'At a time when British Rail staff come in for so much criticism, I would like to thank them for the way in which they help disabled passengers overcome the obstacles in their way.'

Mr Marsh replied that one of the problems with British Rail was that it is too big. 'It would be easy for a monster of this size to be insensitive to the needs of people it wishes to serve.' It was good for such a large organisation to concentrate on small, worthwhile things now and again.

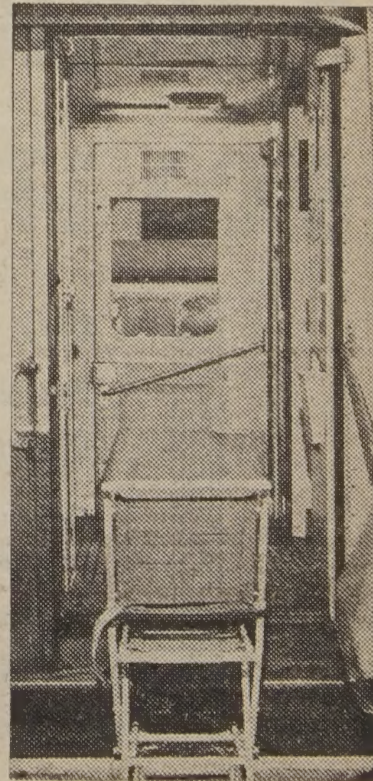
**SINCE 1968** second class Inter City coaches (see picture right) have been built with widened doors and hand rails, to help disabled passengers.

get up and walk about. It is based on a system a friend of hers had installed. The difference is that his cost £500, hers is under £100. It incorporates such things as rotary filing cabinets within arm's reach, shallow, transparent and light drawers, plenty of leg room under the desk for wheelchair users, adjustable shelves which can be positioned at just the right height.

The main point is that everything is immediately accessible. You do not have to stoop down to the bottom drawer of a conventional filing cabinet. Neither do you have to cross to the other side of the room to reach a vital reference book. In fact you never have to leave your chair. 'If more thought were given to providing proper working environments for handicapped people,' she said, 'then more of them could work and become productive, instead of having to sit at home on Social Security benefit.'

As befits her name, Penny Thrift is very concerned about the costs involved in looking after handicapped people. 'Do you know that diseases of the nervous system cost this country between two and three thousand million pounds a year,' she says indignantly. 'Why isn't more being spent on research into these diseases.'

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## Therapy on the right note

A MUSIC therapy day release course for teachers and play-group leaders will be held on Tuesday, May 6, 13, 20, and June 10, 17, 24 1975, from 9.15 am to 4.0 pm. It will take place in the Music Therapy Department, Goldie Leigh Hospital, Abbey Wood, London. Members of the course will have the opportunity of observing individual therapy, to participate in practical work with groups of children and in discussions. Fees for the complete course of six sessions will be £36.

Inquiries to Miss S. Beresford-Pearse, Head of Music Therapy Department, Goldie Leigh Hospital, Lodge Hill, Abbey Wood, London SE2 0AY.

CUSTOMERS at the Pike and Musket pub, Tuffley, Gloucestershire, have bought their second £240 electric wheelchair in recent months. It has been presented to the Gloucester and District Spastics Association.

## Concert cheque for White Lodge



CUB Scouts and Brownies from Cranleigh, Surrey, raised £100 with a concert for White Lodge Spastics Centre, Chertsey. In the picture, Mrs Carol Smith, Administrator of White Lodge Centre, receives a cheque from Akela Barry Williams. Looking on are Brownie Maria Levett and Cub Scout Sean Moran.

Picture by courtesy of West Sussex County Times.

## Two letters tell a happy story

THE Society's Supplies Officer, Mr A. M. Mitchell, had his working day considerably brightened when he received the following letters. They are self explanatory.

'Raymond Jordan, a severely handicapped athetoid at Monyhull Hospital, has recently been supplied, through the good offices of The Spastics Society, with a reconditioned IBM electric typewriter. Raymond is permanently in a wheelchair, his limbs are useless and his speech is virtually incomprehensible. He can read quite well and the typewriter is an invaluable aid to communication. He types with the aid of a peg attached to his right foot with the typewriter on the floor. I am a voluntary visitor to the hospital and I see him at least once a week. The typewriter is a godsend in enabling us to converse. I am hoping that in a few weeks

Raymond will produce an article for Spastics News. In the meantime I want to assure you that I can think of no possible case for whom one of these typewriters can mean more.

'Raymond was anxious that one of the very first bits of typing he did would be a letter to you to thank the Society for its generosity in making this wonderful gift possible. The typewriter has been paid for, by the way, by the Hospital Social Club.

'I enclose Raymond's letter exactly as he typed it. It took him an hour and a half to type but he was determined to do it all himself, without help from me. I assure you that it represents a considerable achievement.

'May I add my thanks to Raymonds?'

**Roy Hull,  
Hall Green,  
Birmingham.**

Ward 8  
Monyhull Hospital  
Kings Heath  
Birmingham 14  
15.2.75

Dear Sir,  
Mant thanja for the wonderful typewriter...  
Which I work with a attachment to my foot.  
I am still learning to work this machine..  
I am mvery slpw at present but I hope to get better with practice,  
Yours faithfully  
Raymond Jordan

## My night to remember with the generous Indians of Wembley

AS a new, recently appointed Regional Officer for The Spastics Society, I was flattered when my Senior Regional Officer asked me to represent him at a play being staged by the 'Avishkar Group' at a school in Wembley. Being young and unsuspecting, I happily agreed, and sent off my letter of acceptance.

The day arrived, and having collected my girl friend, I drove to Wembley.

We found the school without difficulty, and were mildly surprised to find that there was a large number of Indians around. Still, that is not so unusual, and we parked the car, and went in. We soon found that it was not quite as usual as we had expected, however, as we appeared to be the only English people present. Officials scurried round to take us to our seats—in the front row. We were shortly joined by four other English people—representatives of the London Regional Fund for the Blind, and Oxfam. I believe

we formed the English population that evening.

Other people took their places, and the play began. I suppose we should really have expected it, but we were more than a little taken aback to discover that the whole performance was in Parsee—an Indian dialect! We sat in the front row, wondering what to do. The play was a comedy and the audience was rolling about with laughter behind and around us. What else could we do than sit with a rather frozen grin on our faces, and take it as it came? We couldn't think of anything else, anyway, so we did.

### 'Half time'

In the five intervals we were entertained by the skilful Salami the Magician, who luckily performed in English.

At the third interval, 'half time' was declared, and we were invited to refresh ourselves with Indian delicacies and Pepsi. After the refreshments, an auction was held. An enormous number of unsold programmes remained,

and these were auctioned for up to £12 per bundle. This was because the money was for charity, and because each programme had a lucky number. Unfortunately we were unable to make use of our lucky numbers—we couldn't read the script.

After this remarkable performance, which must have raised over £50 in 10 minutes, all the guests were taken on the stage, and sat facing the audience. Mrs Ghandi, the wife of the High Commissioner, made a speech, then the representatives of the three charities were presented with their cheques—for £101 each!

Then came the most difficult moment—we had to make a brief speech of thanks. I said something about it being a most enjoyable way of raising money for charity, even if I had to make up my own story to fit the actions as the play proceeded. This raised a laugh, and later proved to have been a very wise comment. After the ladies had been presented with a bouquet of flowers each, and a large number of prizes had been handed out for the lucky number pro-

grammes, the play got under way again.

Obviously remembering the comment in my speech, the gentleman next to me 'adopted' me. He would roar with laughter at some comment, and then lean across and explain the joke to me; I then explained it to my girl friend. It transpired that the story I had been making up corresponded reasonably with the actual plot.

### Friendly

Apart from the wonderful sum of money raised, and apart from the very good performance given, what impressed me most of all was the friendly way we were accepted into that group. Many people went out of their way to make us feel welcome, and one wonders how different that would have been, had the nationalities been reversed.

It had been an enjoyable evening, and a fascinating experience supplying me with yet another story for my memoirs. I will, however, be examining invitations a little more carefully in future. . . .

David P. Saint

## Portsmouth group plans painting contest

THE Portsmouth and District Spastics Society is sponsoring a painting competition, to raise money for leisure facilities. The competition will be part of the Portsmouth City Festival.

Entries will be on show at an exhibition at St Andrew's Church, Southsea, between June 3 and 14. But in order to be accepted, they must be delivered to the Spastics Work Centre in Warren Avenue, Portsmouth, by May 1.

There will be cash prizes, provided by the Society, and more prizes from other sponsors. Donated paintings will be sold, and the money will go towards the Portsmouth Society.

Said the Press Officer, Mr H. G. Chappell: 'This is a new venture for the local Society. Since it was formed in 1950, we have been primarily con-

cerned with bricks and mortar.

'First we raised money for the cerebral palsy unit at Queen Alexander Hospital, which last September was replaced by the Heathfield Schools at Fareham. Next came the spastics work centre at Warren Avenue, Portsmouth, which provides jobs for severely handicapped adults. Finally there is the residential hostel at Moorings Way, Portsmouth.

Work is expected to begin on this shortly.

'Now we are turning our attention to the quality of life of spastics at work and leisure. It is hoped to give them greater fulfilment and to continue the great strides that have been made in pre-school and school treatment into adult life.'

The Society hopes to use money raised by the painting exhibition for visits to theatres, art galleries, sporting events and so on, and to stimulate integration of handicapped people within the community.

THE North Staffordshire Spastics Association now has an ambulance—converted from a Ford transit van. Pictured at the handing-over ceremony is group President Mrs Elsie Ashley, centre, with group members. On the right of the picture are Philip Ball, 14, and Andrew Ward, 11, who raised £118 towards the cost of the van by holding a jumble sale.

Picture by courtesy of Staffordshire Evening Sentinel.

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# The man who brought TV fame to Joey and his friends

MILLIONS of television viewers watched the repeat transmission in March of 'Joey,' the brilliant BBC Horizon film about an intelligent spastic who has been in St Lawrence's subnormality hospital, Caterham, for nearly 50 years, able to communicate only through fellow spastic Ernie Roberts.

AS reported in the March *Spastics News*, Ernie Roberts won The Spastics Society's Achievement of the Year Award. Just a fortnight later, Brian Gibson, who produced and directed Horizon's 'Joey,' received the British Screen Award for the film in the 'best specialised programme' category.

Brian Gibson has worked for BBC television ever since he came down from Cambridge with a history degree. At first he was in the current affairs department and later joined the Horizon team which has made many successful documentaries, highlighting a wide range of social problems. The series included Christopher La Fontaine's 'Stretch Up Tall,' a graphic and painstakingly researched account of cerebral palsy which featured the Society's Ingfield Manor School and other spastics' centres.

Apart from 'Joey,' in the British Screen Awards this year, Horizon once again won the trophy for the best factual TV series. Earlier, Brian Gibson was also presented with the Critics Circle Award for his film about a hospital 50 years ago.

Brian, who has been with Horizon for six years, will soon be leaving to produce a couple of television plays, but hopes to return to the documentary scene later. The life of a television producer is one

of total dedication. He had been at work since 8.30 am on the day when I met him, and the 'phone in his office at the BBC Television Centre was ringing practically non-stop. The job leaves little time for private life and he is not married.

'If I had been married, I'd be divorced by now,' he said between 'phone calls. 'With a film like "Joey," for instance, you work evenings, weekends—all the hours God made.'

The idea for this programme originated when a copy of Joey Deacon's autobiography, 'Tongue Tied,' was sent to Horizon through the post. 'We were so moved by it that we immediately decided to make a film of Joey's life story,' Brian told me.

## Convincing

He auditioned 30 able-bodied professional actors for the part, none of whom could convincingly reproduce the involuntary movements of a severe athetoid and eventually it was decided to use actors who were actually handicapped. Even then, it was a difficult task to find two people who not only looked like Joey but had the same degree of disability.

Dozens of spastics' schools and centres were contacted all over the country and finally Christopher Molesworth and John Prasher were chosen. Christopher, who is a pupil of the Society's Wilfred Pickles School, near Stamford, played the part of Joey as a child. He and his parents stayed with the actors playing Joey's mother and father at Brian Gibson's home for three weeks so that a really close relationship could be established.

John Prasher, from Croydon, who played Joey as a young man, has physical handicaps and a speech defect almost identical to Joey's. Thus, he was more aware than any non-spastic actor could be,

of the frustrations inherent in not being able to communicate verbally. John became fully identified with the role by means of frequent rehearsals with Tony Robinson, an able-bodied actor cast as the young Ernie Roberts.

Despite the technical problems of mixing professional

the book are planning their first-ever trip abroad, and it is hoped that eventually the quartet might be able to move into a bungalow of their own.

Another valuable result of the programme is the close friendship which has grown up between Joey, Chris Molesworth, John Prasher and Brian Gibson, together with the rest of the film-making unit.



actors with those who were not only inexperienced but severely handicapped as well, the film took 4½ months to make from the original idea to final completion—about average for a Horizon programme.

'It was one of those films which just happens to turn out perfectly,' said Brian.

The first transmission of 'Joey' brought a tremendous response from viewers. The BBC and Joey Deacon at the hospital received hundreds of letters, many of them enclosing money. As a result of these donations, Joey and the three friends who helped with

PRINCESS Anne hands Brian Gibson the trophy for 'Joey,' the best specialised programme in the British Screen Awards Presentation at the Albert Hall.

Picture by courtesy of 'Broadcast.'

The film was probably so successful because it tells, more vividly than volumes of printed words, what it is really like to be a spastic. An impatient schoolmistress orders, 'Do try to keep still, Joey!' and the little boy's attempts to control his athetoid

spasms naturally makes him more jerky than ever. An assessment board asks Joey questions which he can answer perfectly well, but because he cannot enunciate the words, he is certified as a lunatic for half a lifetime. The least imaginative viewer could identify with the frustrations of such a situation.

The film also conveys the warm relationship which has grown up over the years between the four members of Joey's 'family' at St Lawrence's hospital. Joey himself is the ideas man, whether campaigning for a television set on the ward, arranging a stay with relatives or thinking up phrases for his book. Ernie is the interpreter, devoting his life unselfishly to Joey's ideas. Michael, the only one of the four who can both read and write, deals with anything which requires putting pen to paper, while the physically able Tom ministers to the spastics' personal needs with a quiet efficiency which might have led to a nursing career of his own if this did not depend on academic qualifications.

## Unique

Each relies on the other three, and their combined skills form a unique partnership which has undoubtedly helped to make life more tolerable in a long-stay hospital. The group is held together by Joey's lively personality. Despite his severe speech defect he seems to have a wonderful capacity for relating to other people and bringing out the best in them.

He had made the most of his life within its narrow limits, although one wonders what he might have achieved but for the cruel irony of his mother's early death. Brian Gibson's film brings out very strongly this tragic waste of human potential.

ANNE PLUMMER.

## Penny's ideas

Cont. from Page 3

to find out what causes them? That could save millions.'

For her own work, Penny is very hard up. So far she has been sponsored for the various projects undertaken. But the sponsorship was for two years, and now that period is up. Several exciting projects are being held up for want of money, and Penny is busily engaged in looking for new sponsors.

One of the ideas she is hoping to develop, if funds are found, is a motorised caravan, designed specifically for the disabled. The plan is to give them complete independence. Driving controls would be adapted for a disabled driver. Then it would be an easy matter for him to move on to a seat which slides on an overhead track along the length of the vehicle, from which just about everything would be in easy reach. A kind of branch line would run off towards the lavatory. Bed making and cooking facilities would be simplified.

If the project is not held back through lack of funds, it will open the doors for the first time ever, for disabled people to go away on holiday unattended. A major step towards giving them independence.

Right at the other end of the scale is something she invented which is so ingenious and yet so simple that it makes you wonder why you never thought of it. It is a 'bin chair,' made from a plastic dustbin cut to size and shape and then upholstered. Cheerful and cheap. Ideal for handicapped children.

Penny was invited to set up her Disabilities Design Research Group about two years ago, after obtaining her degree. The latest development is that she has been awarded a grant by the National Fund into Research into Crippling Diseases, to investigate the design needs of the disabled.

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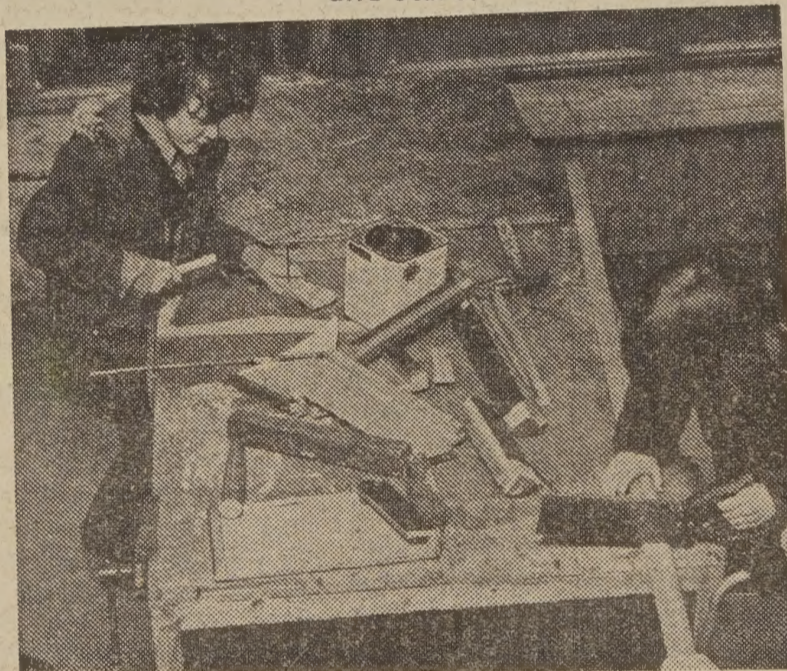
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# The wonderful world of the

## Where handicapped discover the rough of ordinary



It's a busy life for a child in an adventure playground. But there is sometimes time to just sit and stare.



A woodwork session in progress. The children can also take part in cooking, painting, modelling, and innumerable other activities.



Happiness is the keynote, and it's shown on the faces of these youngsters. Note the tractor tyres in the background which can be turned into swings and things.



Hand-operated tricycles are provided for children who have difficulty walking.

THERE can be no greater contrast to the super sophistication of Kings Road, Chelsea, than the scene behind the blue door in Old Church Street, just round the corner. You pass out of a world in which adults are trying desperately to be something they are not into a chaotic world in which children are ebulliently and joyfully just being children.

It is the razmataz world of an adventure playground, and like all other adventure playgrounds the

atmosphere is one of fun. The difference lies in the fact that all the children are handicapped in some way. Some are totally handicapped, others are spastics, there are blind children, deaf children, autistic children and about every other category of handicapped child.

The Handicapped Adventure Playground Association was formed more than five years ago by a group of people who had already discovered the benefits of these playgrounds to able-bodied children. They felt that handicapped children



The Rectory Gardens are Church of England property. The likelihood of them passing into the clutches of developers

## REPORT BY PETER COOK

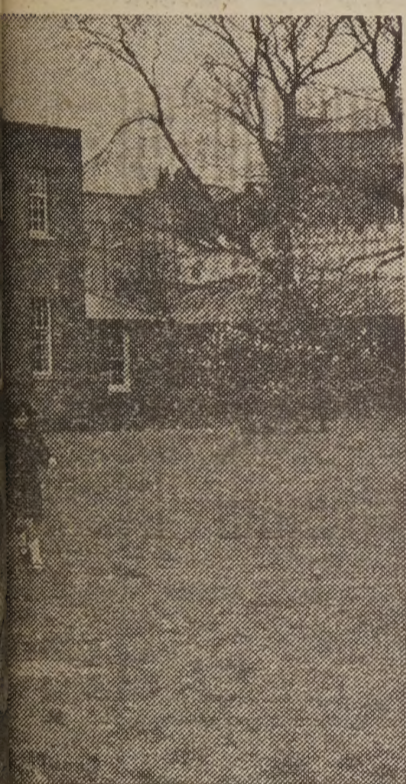
# he adventure playground opped youngsters ugh and tumble inary childhood

should also benefit. The driving force was Lady Allen, of Hurtwood.

Their first playground was opened in the Rectory Gardens, Old Church Street, in 1970. Because it is sited on Church of England property, it is relatively safe from the clutches of developers.

Inside there is a wonderland of contraptions with which the children have fun. There is a kind of tower, with a platform which has a trapdoor through which the children leap death defyingly on to piles of foam rubber below. There is a rivulet leading to a little pond with a bridge across it, willow patterned plate style, where children splash and play and float little boats.

There is a sunken house



property. There is little like-developers.

which the children designed and built themselves. Old car tyres have been made into swings. There are hand propelled trikes, battery operated cars and a pedal operated go-cart, so that the more handicapped children can become mobile.

There is even a pet rabbit, and an aviary full of budgerigars, many of whom are in interesting conditions.

'The idea is to give the children as much independence as possible,' said play leader Paul Soames. 'Many of them come from flats, or hospitals or other institutions. Often they don't get a chance to play with other children. They miss out on the rough and tumble from which ordinary children learn so much.

'Often they are full of pent-up frustrations, and coming here once a week helps to release them. Falling through a trap-door on to a pile of foam rubber gives them a tremendous release from tension.

'We don't worry too much about what the children do here or how well they do it. The important thing is that they enjoy themselves. My assistants and I don't see our-



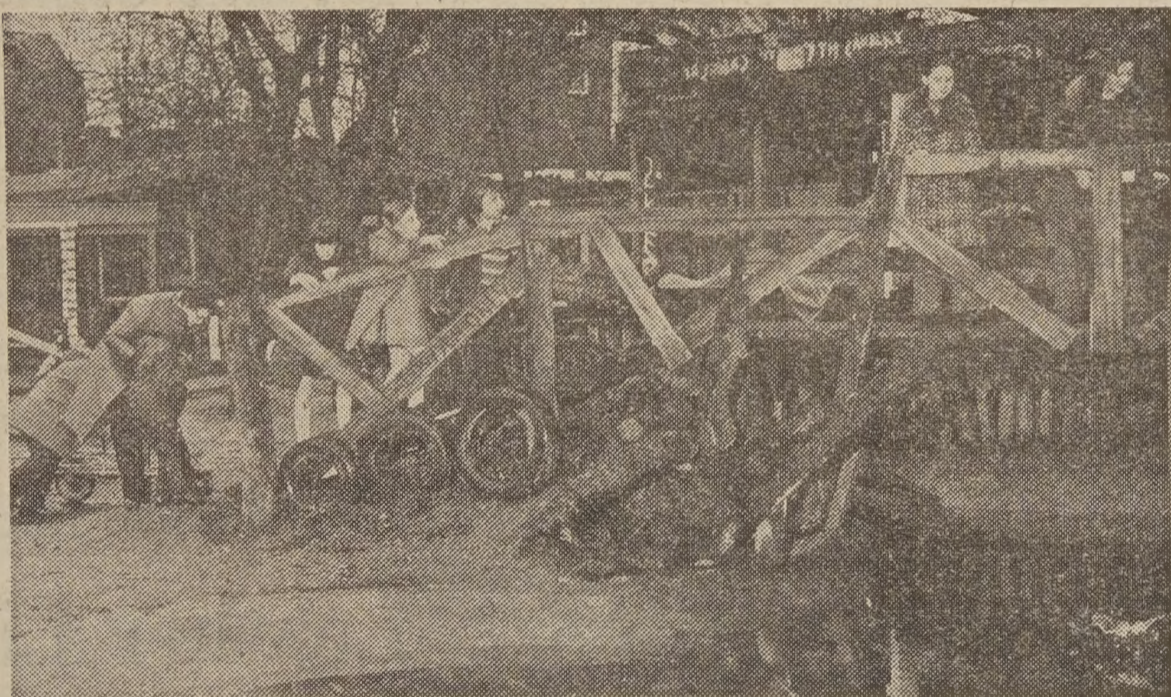
A boy confined to a wheelchair has built himself an aeroplane. The important thing is that he enjoyed making it.

selves in the role of teacher, or parent. We try not to adopt an authoritative approach, but act as their friends instead.'

At the moment about 500 children benefit from the HAPA playground every week. But there are seldom more than 50 children there at one-

time. However, the organisation is expanding all the time, and two more playgrounds will be opened this year at Islington and at Wandsworth.

But at the moment the Chelsea playground is the only one of its kind in this country, and probably the world.



A bridge over the untroubled waters of the playground pond, a never-ending source of fun for the children. Other features have been built by the children themselves — and that is the best fun of all.



'A horse or two for my kingdom.' In the adventure playground every child is king.



The pedal-operated go-cart was imported from Denmark and cost £300. But it's a great favourite with the children.

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A handicapped boy makes a big splash for himself. Much of the play equipment is made up from old props given by the Aldwych Theatre.

# Conflict of opinion on the Award

**RICHARD GOMM**, a finalist in this year's Spastics Society Achievement Award, has expressed outspoken criticism (right), questioning the whole concept of such an award.

Richard, 22, was among the most severely disabled of this year's finalists. He cannot walk, or speak, and his arms are strapped down to prevent involuntary spasms. Formerly at the Society's Thomas Delarue School, he has published poetry and is now studying at York University.

We thought it right that Spastics News should offer a platform for his opinions, but we also invited **LINDA BERWICK**, 26, last year's winner, to put the case for the 'opposition.'

Linda, both spastic and blind, works as a telephone operator in a City bank, has trained other switchboard girls and her employers say she is their best-ever operator. She is also founder-organiser and tireless fund raiser for a 'mixed disabilities' club.

Richard Gomm (a finalist) says:

# 'Senseless'—and not even good publicity

LAST month the winners of The Spastics Society's Special Achievement Award were announced in Spastics News. I was among the runners-up; and so, after reading and considering the following criticisms, you may wish to call me a bad loser. If so, I accept your judgment. However, this article was written before the announcement, and its publication was not dependent on the judges' decision.

My aim in writing it is not to deride the winners but to express the personal deeply-felt opinion that the whole concept of such an award presents a misunderstanding of the spastic persons' standpoint: and that it is just one symptom of the Society's fundamentally mistaken attitude in relation to the people it undeniably helps.

After admitting it is not subjective, I believe this line of thought is prevalent among spastic people. Yet it is vital to hear other views from spastic people in Spastics News and elsewhere, if such criticisms are to be justified and taken notice of by the Society.

Basically I believe such

an Award for special achievement can have little reason behind it. Generally one initiates an Award in the hope that the candidates will reach new heights in each successive presentation: this is true of the Society's literary contest for spastics. Yet with the Achievement Award, it does not seem possible to get people to try any harder, as they are mostly doing their utmost already just in the art of living the way they wish.

Equally, an award with such a wide perspective seems impossible to judge coherently. I would maintain certain unacceptable criteria are introduced, consciously or not, into the judging. For example, the

winner will have done something eye-catching that the public can relate to. How can one begin to compare, say, a young man's achievements that are mostly academic with an educationally sub-normal child, who has literally struggled for years trying to put his own vest on, and who has finally succeeded?

Such comparisons are plainly impossible to establish and properly judge. Yet with the well-known need for publicity, by choosing the first candidate The Spastics Society can let it be said (truly or not), in the publicity, that it has enabled this young man to get to university—and a high percentage of the public can empathise with him in his achievement. But how much publicity would accrue to the probably much truer statement that the Society has enabled this child to put his vest on? Few of the public have even thought about putting their vest on, let alone struggled.

I cannot deny the Society's need of this publicity for donations while the State does not take over its good work. However, to base an award that in the least part might rely on a candidate's achievement as being eye-catching, or potentially good publicity, makes it senseless. Nor does the Award seem exceptionally good publicity in itself: it highlights three or four spastic people, yet by the very fact that they appear among the winners, it will make their achievements look extraordinary to the public. What is distressingly worse, following from this, is by presenting the Award to anybody, one implies, whether it is intended or not, that the rest have tried and achieved less, which is simply untrue. And this may well dishearten some, especially spastic children and their parents, who know they have tried their very hardest.

If I had been chosen for the Achievement Award I would have accepted it, because I need the £250 prize. Stretched a little it would pay for a nine week term, or amply allow me to take a holiday in Canada. I would have accepted it, certainly—with moral twinges (these I have had since I let my name be entered on the short-list); yet it would be also very gratefully and thankfully indeed that I would take the money. However, I would still feel obsequious and unacceptably patronised by the Society's Award, and cringe on being told that I have done well. . . . As I was not chosen nothing has changed; I am still very indebted and grateful to the Society for the good education it gave me.

But nor would the above criticisms change: I call for the Spastics' Society to use the money more effectively where it is needed by spastic people.

Linda Berwick (a winner) says:

# But look what it did for me . . .

I did not win the Award for great academic achievements. I only attained three GCE 'O' levels. But throughout my life my parents taught me to have an awareness and understanding for my fellow sufferers.

It is only when you have a disability yourself that you can fully appreciate the problems that disability brings. I had no conception of blindness until I became blind in 1964. In some respects I am glad this happened. Because I can look at things from both sides of the coin.

I believe that all things are done for a purpose.

I knew that with my parents' help that I could turn my adversity to positive use. In 1970 I founded a club which integrated all forms of disability. My policy is that, whatever the disability, life is worth living to the full and that life is good. I wanted disabled people and members of society to see that we could lead a normal life.

Just because we sit in a wheelchair from time to time, it does not mean that our brains are in our backside.

One of the reasons why I received the Award was for my efforts in this field. That wonderful day in '74 was a culmination of everything that my parents had worked for during the last 24 years. Sometimes I

feel that our parents need recognition for their efforts on our behalf.

That Award is a great stepping stone for things in the future. It makes people realise that there are spastics who have made their way in the world. The publicity I received from the Award did much in helping me to raise funds for a second hydraulic ambulance. Capital Radio showed great interest and raised over £2,838 on the club's behalf.

Suddenly the general public realised that I had a voice and I have been invited to talk to a number of groups of people, which can only serve to assert our place in society.

If I had to sum up my feelings on the Achievement of the Year Award, this would be that I think it was probably one of the greatest moves the Society has ever made. In my opinion rather than disbanding the scheme, there should be many more like it.

I did not think I merited such a prize. I am striving to make myself worthy with each day that passes. Believe me, it does not do any harm to have a goal to strive for.

We should aim for challenges throughout our life, and who knows, the Award may be what we are looking for?

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## Isle of Man membership tops 13,000

MISS MARILYN READ, of Oncham, on the Isle of Man, is a very important person. She was the 13,000th member to be enrolled on the island, and our picture shows Marilyn receiving a bouquet from Manx Radio's Peter Kneale with, from left to right, the collectors Mr and Mrs Cyril Oldham and area supervisor Laurie Watterson, looking on. News of this membership milestone was featured in several newspapers and on the Manx Radio main news bulletin.

In recognition of the achievements of Spastics Pool collectors on the

island, there was an informal get-together at the Villiers Hotel, Douglas, on March 25.

### News about the Spastics Pool

## Top Ten team meets the collectors

A TEAM of six from Top Ten played host to 360 collectors and guests at the Assembly Rooms, Lincoln, on March 3. Coaches brought the collectors from as far afield as Skegness, Scunthorpe, Louth and Grimsby. A presentation by the Marketing Department was followed by a buffet and music provided by the Len Emerson Band.

Arthur Dobson, Manager of the Homework Section of The Spastics Society, sold £95 worth of jewellery, and Mr Ron Ward represented the

Lincolnshire Spastics Society.

The next evening, 260 collectors and guests joined the team at the Town Hall, Peterborough and, once again, Arthur Dobson reported a satisfactory evening with sales totalling £50. Mr Joe Purlson, Chairman of the Peterborough and District Spastics Society, was there to appeal to all collectors to encourage their members to nominate friends and relatives in an effort to expand the Spastics Pool.



DORA BRYAN, Norman Vaughan and Mark Wynter, who were starring in a show at the Bristol Hippodrome, pictured during a visit to Top Ten's head office in Bristol. They judged a holiday competition published on the weekly bulletin which attracted a record entry of three-quarters of a million and presented a first dividend cheque to a local winner. Picture shows Mark Wynter, Norman Vaughan and Dora Bryan handing over a cheque for £1,847.54 to Guy Wheatcroft, of Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol.



PICTURE above: A discussion involving, from left to right, Derek Lancaster-Gaye, Director of Resources; Roy Laver; Rodney Brooks, Director of Finance; Reginald Norton, Director of Appeals and Information, and Geoffrey Arter, during a meeting between executives of The Spastics Society and Top Ten Promotions, at Westmorland House, Bristol.

## A prize cheque to make anybody smile



A SMILE that says it all: Jack Hand, of Westgate, Kent, receiving a cheque for £2,457.80 from Mrs 'Billie' Finlay, wife of Councillor Finlay. The presentation took place at the Westgate United Services Club.

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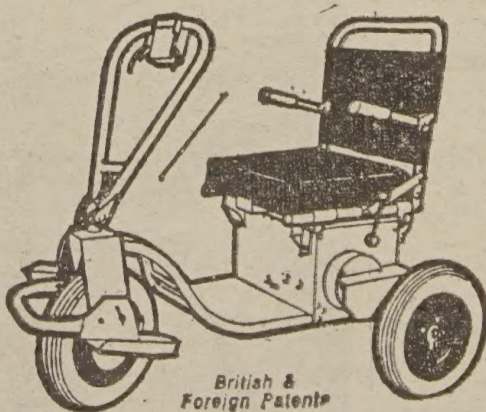
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## Roberto joins team at Colwall Court



SOCCKER fans among the guests at Colwall Court holiday home for spastics this year will be pleased to meet new staff member Roberto Calegero. Before he came to England Roberto played football for the top Spanish national league club Athletic Bilbao for two years. He has now signed on with Colwall Court's local club, Bexhill Town, in Sussex.

Picture by courtesy of Bexhill-on-Sea Observer.

## To stimulate more interest

A CHEESE and wine evening was held by Hemel Hempstead and District Spastics Group, Hertfordshire, to stimulate local interest in work for spastics. Guests, who were welcomed by the group's President, actor William Lucas, watched the film 'What is a Spastic?' and heard a talk about the Society's work by Mr Cyril Cattell, Senior Regional Officer, East.

Said Mrs Kathleen Allen, the group's press officer, 'We have been very encouraged by the response received from this event.'

# Festival Hall date rewards determination

TO APPEAR at the Royal Festival Hall in London is a distinction in itself. But when 21-year-old Brian Evans, of Salisbury Drive, Habberley Estate, Kidderminster, steps on to the stage to play his electric organ at a national concert on May 31, it will be not just a personal triumph in a remarkable fight against adversity, but a proud moment for his parents, Mr and Mrs David Evans.

Because Brian was born a spastic, so badly handicapped that at six years of age he could neither stand nor sit up in a chair unaided. A twin, born seven weeks prematurely, he weighed only four pounds at birth and the first 18 months of his life saw him close to death on many occasions as he battled against bronchial pneumonia, blood transfusions and spells in oxygen tents. His parents frequently resigned themselves to his inability to survive.

But Brian eventually pulled through, although his cerebral palsy meant that there was little he could do for himself. So his parents set about what seemed the impossible task of making it possible for Brian to do what everyone else takes for granted—standing on his own two feet.

Mr Evans got some chromium bars, similar to towel rails, and fixed them at intervals up the living room

wall so that instead of rolling everywhere Brian could drag himself to his feet. To encourage Brian to use his arms and feet, Mr Evans built a flat truck with swivel wheels, which Brian lay on face downwards and pushed himself around. He also began to push a doll's pram filled with bricks up and down the garden path. Parallel bamboo canes fixed between two chairs were another walking aid.

## Training

Brian's progress was helped by skilled training at the Carlson House School for Spastics in Harborne where he went as often as possible for occupational therapy. He also received treatment three times a week at Birmingham's Ladywood and Children's Hospitals and eventually he became able to ride a three-wheeled bicycle.

By now, he was a very determined young man and in 1960 he was accepted for Chailey Heritage Trust School and Hospital in Sussex which caters for spastics, thalidomide victims and the mentally handicapped. He was there for six years and after dispensing with his leg irons, began to take a keen interest in sports, winning the 30 yards dash and being a member of the successful relay team.

He showed a flair for music, began to learn the piano, and at 15 played Bach's Air in G before 400 people at the school's speech day. A year later, Brian left Chailey and after more therapy at Harborne was accepted for the spastics training centre at Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire.

Returning home in May,



1971, Brian spent more than a year looking for work, and to help him pass the time, his parents bought him a chord organ. Eventually he started full-time work as a bobbin room servicer at Quayle Carpets, and the full wages he earned on merit enabled him to buy an electric organ. Twice weekly, on day-release from Quayle, he attended the local college to learn music and the piano.

## In demand

Soon he was in demand as an organist by local clubs and organisations, but a disappointment came last September when he could not be accepted at the college again because of the size of the class and the inability to give him sufficient individual attention. He still needs tuition but no-

one has yet been found to help him.

It was Brian's weekly visits to the Kidderminster Youth Club which led to his invitation to play in London. He joined the Gateway Club for handicapped people which is a club within a club at Kidderminster Youth Club. There is a national association of Gateway clubs and Brian was nominated to represent Kidderminster in a concert at Birmingham to choose three artists to represent the West Midlands region at the Gateway clubs' National concert at the Festival Hall.

Kidderminster Gateway Club is organising coachloads of supporters for the concert.

Picture and article by courtesy of the Kidderminster Shuttle.

## Spastics and students share art show cash

FUNDS for Scottish spastics will benefit by several hundreds of pounds following a most successful exhibition and sale of art in the Marryat Hall, Dundee, organised by the staff and students of Jordanstone College of Art, the Scottish Council for Spastics, and the Dundee and District Spastics Association.

The students at the College were delighted. Said one: 'By sharing the proceeds we are helping spastics and they are helping us, for it is expensive to mount an exhibition and we've never had the opportunity before of displaying—and selling—our work to the general public.'

And the Countess of Mansfield, who opened the four-day exhibition, had a telling point: 'The exhibits are very reasonably priced and it could be a splendid investment to buy an early work of a famous artist-to-be,' she said.

Lord Provost Moore of Dundee endorsed the need to help spastics, and support of the Corporation in providing the hall and floral displays contributed to the success of the event. Firms and organisations in the Tayside region responded also in a way which augurs well for the Scottish Council's next major project—a large residential centre for adult spastics and others physically handicapped, to be built in Perth.

The exhibits consisted of sculpture, pottery, ceramics and jewellery as well as paintings.

## In three years they raised £4,000

THE fourth annual Heather Ball to be organised by the Ponteland Spastics Group, Northumberland, in aid of Percy Hedley School, was held recently. The 240 guests enjoyed a three course meal prepared and served by group committee members and a cabaret was given by trombonist-comedian, George Chisholm. Also among the guests were Bill Simpson of 'Dr Finlay's Casebook' and his wife, actress Tracy Reed.

Proceeds from the event amounted to £630 for the Percy Hedley School, and this brings to over £4,000 the amount raised for the school since the Ponteland Group was formed three years ago.

## Advice in Australia

THE Australian Government has set up a National Advisory Council for the Handicapped, which will advise the Government on all aspects of its policies affecting the rehabilitation of the injured and the handicapped. Council members are among Australia's leading authorities in the rehabilitation field and include members of major voluntary organisations as well as some handicapped people.

A SPONSORED swim was held at Central Park, Plymouth, in aid of Trengweth Centre, and 250 swimmers took part. £394.67 has been raised so far, with money still to come.

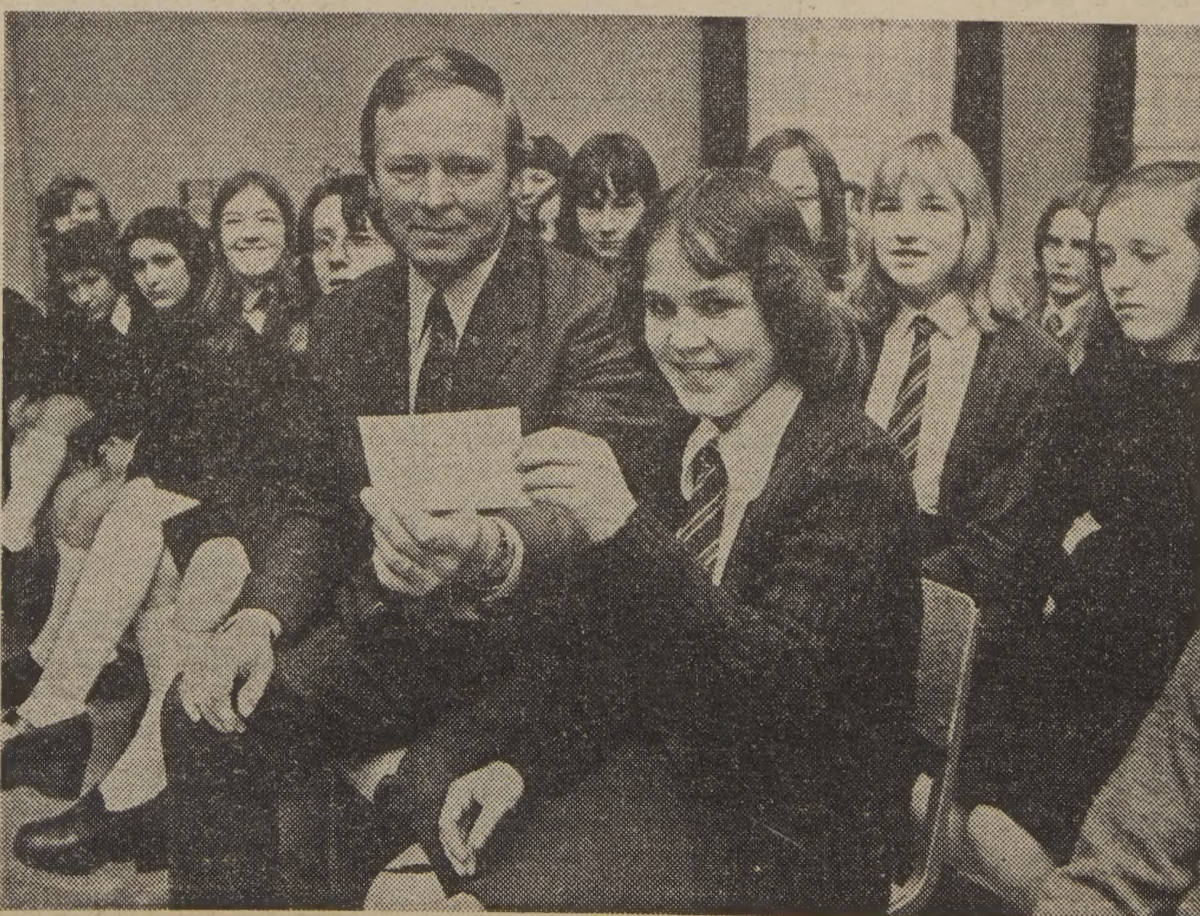
## Their walk helps pool fund

PUPILS of Frodsham County Secondary School, Cheshire, held a 10-mile sponsored walk in aid of Daresbury Hall, The Spastics Society's adult residential centre near Warrington. The event brought in £390.61 from sponsors

and our picture shows Mr Osman, Deputy Warden at the centre, receiving a cheque for this amount from Frodsham pupil Elaine Corrin at a special presentation in the school hall.

The money will help pay for a new swimming pool now nearing completion for the residents at Daresbury Hall.

Picture by courtesy of Runcorn Weekly News.



With best wishes to the work and efforts of the Society

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# New Council will champion children's cause

A NEW voluntary organisation has sprung up, to co-ordinate the work of bodies concerned with handicapped children. Called the Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children, the new organisation was born as a result of growing concern about the gaps, overlaps and lack of information about services.

Said a spokesman for the Council: 'We aim to promote co-operation between organisations of all kinds, so as to ensure the maximum use of available resources.'

'THE Council will be building up a bank of information about services, facilities and projects which can be drawn on by parents, as well as by statutory and voluntary organisations.'

'By providing a forum for discussion, the Voluntary Council intends to promote the co-operation, study and action which could help handicapped children throughout the country.'

The new organisation has been launched with a grant from the Carnegie UK Trust, and another from a second trust which wishes to remain anonymous. Chairman is Mrs Margaret Belson, former chairman of the National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital. The Senior Officer is Miss Sylvia Watson OBE, former Director of Social Services for Cambridgeshire.

The Council is holding a day conference on June 19 when the principal speaker will be Mr Alfred Morris, the Minister for the Disabled.

## Help with learning problems

'SOMETHING'S wrong with my child' is one of the first titles in a new series 'Health for the Family and You,' being published by Macdonald and Jane's. This book, first published in America, is about children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, hyperactivity, poor muscle control and spatial or aural perceptual problems. Written by an American child psychologist, a doctor and an author with special knowledge of the problem, the book is aimed chiefly at parents.

Much of the text is taken up with a discussion of how the American State system, on the whole, fails to cope with these educational misfits. However, British readers might find it most useful for the examples given of individual children. These 'case histories' help to identify specific learning problems likely to be found in any country.

'Something's Wrong With my Child,' by Milton Brutton, PhD, Sylvia O. Richardson, MD, and Charles Mangel, is published by Macdonald and Jane's, London, price £2.95.

## Our Spastics Shop girls are high flyers!



THE Spastics Society certainly takes on high flying girls as managers for its many shops. Take Pauline Hodnett for example. At 23 she was the Society's youngest manageress, as well as a qualified physical education instructor. She devoted a tremendous amount of energy to the Warminster shop, which was opened in February and soon boosted the turnover to an average of £100 per week. Now Pauline has been told that she has been accepted as a trainee air hostess by British Airways.

In the picture (left) Pauline hands over the key to the shop to Mrs Marjorie Bye, who will take over as manageress. Mrs Bye has up till now been a very keen voluntary helper at the Warminster shop. With them is Mr John Taylor, shops officer for Wales and the West of England.

## Snooker-fan prisoners were on cue with their invitation

WHEN a group of prisoners at HM Prison, Hedon Road, Hull, heard that top snooker and billiards players, Graham Miles and Joyce Gardner, were visiting North Humberside in early March to play exhibition matches in aid of Spastics Society funds, they got off a plea to Joyce post-haste.

'There's a great following of billiards and snooker here,' explained their spokesman. 'We'd love to have professionals come in and play us, and give an exhibition. Would you please try and come.'

Prison rules, alas, prohibited Ladies World Snooker and Billiards Champion, Miss Gardner, from accepting the invitation ('it was such a nice letter and I'd have visited with pleasure').

But on Friday, March 7, Graham Miles, the BBC 'Pot Black' Champion and finalist in the 1974 World Professional Snooker Championship, spent over an hour at Hedon Road playing several frames of snooker with enthusiasts there and laying on an exhibition of tricky shots.

As a gesture of thanks from the prisoners he received a gift of soft toys and other articles which they have made for spastic children, or for sale on the Society's behalf.

Then Graham went on to the Willerby and Kirkella Social Club, Main Street, Willerby, to play an exhibition match with Joyce Gardner and help pot pounds for spastics.

## Work as donation



MEMBERS of the Lions Club of Lancaster and Morecambe add the finishing touches to their work on the games room at the Morecambe spastics centre. The Lions gave up their spare time to decorate this very large room, and, says

Mr Robert Parkin, Secretary of Lancaster, Morecambe and District Spastics Society, their help represents a substantial donation to the group.

Picture by courtesy of Morecambe Guardian.

## Top Ten people at HQ

A PARTY of supervisors and collectors from Top Ten Promotions attended an evening reception at The Spastics Society's Park Crescent Headquarters on Monday, March 17.

The guests were welcomed by James Loring, Director of the Society, and Geoffrey Arter, Director of Top Ten, and saw the film, 'Everybody's Children,' which shows the work being done for children with multiple handicaps at Meldreth.

This was followed by a 'Question and Answer' session and a buffet supper.

Picture and full story in next month's issue of Spastics News.

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# The economy wilts, but business booms for Society

## work centres —and 1,000 spastics have jobs they enjoy

THE Spastics Society's Miriam Harris Work Centre at Chingford opened just five years ago. Since then the Centre's operations have increased the turnover by 100 per cent every year. And this year's figure is expected to gross £100,000.

'What we are aiming for,' said Mr John Hogger, the manager at Chingford, 'is a turnover of a quarter of a million. And this is no pie in the sky ambition. There are about 1,000 spastic employees in our work centres throughout the country, and that is quite a work force.'

When the Miriam Harris

Mr Hogger. 'It is also better if they are producing something which is pleasing, and which is being sold in the shops.'

In line with this philosophy are the decorative lamps produced by the Miriam Harris centre in co-operation with the Lancaster Training Centre. These are attractive and marketed world wide. A new model was displayed at the Ideal Home exhibition.

'At first we just packed them,' said Mr Hogger. 'Now we carry out the whole process, pressing, forming, spot welding, assembling, spraying and packing.'

Another product made by spastics and sold world wide is an adjustable spirit level, the only one of its kind. Work on these was started at Miriam Harris, but now it has been transferred to the Sully Work Centre, in Wales.

At one time the Society's work centres operated independently of one another. But it was clearly more efficient to co-ordinate the operation, and this is done from the Chingford centre.

Office furniture is another aspect of the centre's work. Handles, locking systems, legs and all metal parts are made there. This involves cropping, pressing, forming, drilling, tapping and welding work.

A valuable function of work centres such as the Miriam Harris, is that they can take on contracts which are too small for the major companies. For example, they produce a special filter for fuel injector pumps on a diesel engine. The engine has gone out of production but several

**PICTURE below:** A busy scene at the Miriam Harris Work Centre. This group is busy packing essential components for diesel engines.



**SUE COLLINS** puts the finishing touches to an ornamental porch lamp, watched by one of her workmates. At first the lampwork was merely packed at the Miriam Harris Centre. Now they are completely manufactured by spastics at the Society's work centres. It gives the workers great satisfaction to see them on sale in the shops.

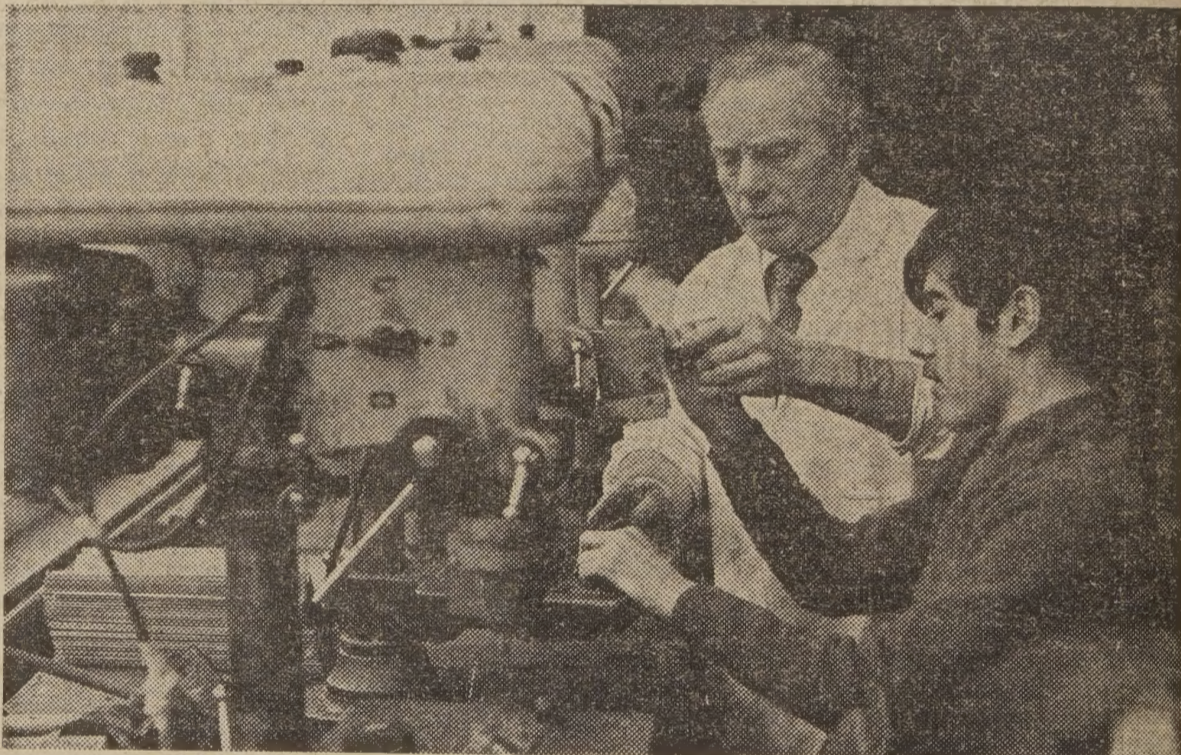
are still in use and parts are needed. If it wasn't for the smaller work centres they would not be manufactured. This is highly skilled work.

More recently the centre has gone into production with a firm known as Titman Tipped

Tools, and it hopes to take over more and more of the manufacturing side of the industry.

So the Society's workshops are making quite a sizeable contribution towards British industry, and they are expand-

ing at a time when other industries are on the decline. Gone for ever are the days when severely handicapped spastics were just given something to occupy themselves with. Now they are truly productive.



**ABOVE:** Metal components for office furniture are cut, stamped out and finished at the Centre. Rowland Thorpe is taught one of the finishing processes by instructor Mr Harry Olson.



**THE** lamps have to be carefully hand painted, which involved careful concentration, as shown by Keith Guyeth. They are then carefully packed ready for distribution.

**Every local group for spastics welcomes new volunteers. Could YOU help? Your local group is:**



**BEAUTY** the pig, one of Shropshire Spastics Society's hardest working fund-raisers, has just produced her fifth litter. This was sold for £32, thus bringing to £171 Beauty's total efforts for spastics so far.

**ANOTHER** stage in the lamp manufacturing process. Carol Joseph is busily engaged on threading electric wire into a lamp which will one day brighten up someone's home. Girls like Carol can earn more than £2 as pocket money, to augment their Social Security benefit.



**ABOVE:** Bending loops on to pieces of metal rod is a pretty simple task. But Jill Parkinson is producing essential components for industry.

centre first opened, workers carried out simple packaging operations. They packed hay for hamsters and other pet foods. But before very long two drilling machines arrived, and they began to take on light engineering work.

'Ideally work for the physically handicapped should involve a high percentage of labour and few materials,' said